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DE RUEHRO #0142/01 0361610
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 051610Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3233
INFO RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE
RUEHFL/AMCONSUL FLORENCE 4018
RUEHNP/AMCONSUL NAPLES 4244
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC
RUCPDC/NOAA WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ROME 000142

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

OES/ENV FOR GAMBLE AND DEADY
OES/OMC FOR RICCI AND WARNER-KRAMER
OES/OPA FOR DEVINCENT
DOI PLEASE PASS TO FWS FOR WEISSGOLD AND NOGUCHI
NOAA PLEASE PASS TO NMFS FOR COTTINGHAM, ROBERTS, AND CIMO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [CITES](#) [EFIS](#) [AORC](#) [KSCA](#) [UNEP](#) [IT](#)

SUBJECT: CITES: ITALY STILL FIGHTING ON CORAL, SAYS EU LIKELY TO AGREE WITH U.S. PROPOSALS EXCEPT BOBCAT; GOI SUPPORTIVE OF FRENCH BLUEFIN TUNA PROPOSAL

Refs: A) 2/4/10 Preston-Gamble e-mail B) 1/29/10
DeVincent-Preston e-mail C) 1/29/10 Weissgold-Preston e-mail D)
1/27/10 Preston-Cimo e-mail E) State 06668

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¶1. (SBU) Summary. Italy is still fighting a losing battle within the European Union (EU) on corals. The GOI has asked the EU Council to reconsider its decision to co-sponsor the U.S. proposal listing Corallium under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Appendix II, and to enter a reservation on it. Italian officials asked informally for the U.S.' help on coral, citing recent findings by the FAO and IUCN which they termed contrary to the U.S. proposal, and urging the U.S. to wait on it for another year. On the other U.S. CITES species proposals, officials predicted that the EU would support all but bobcat. Separately, Agriculture Under Secretary Antonio Buonfiglio was quoted as supporting the French position on a CITES Appendix I listing for bluefin tuna. An MFA official said that the Agriculture Ministry had recommended support for an Appendix I bluefin listing. Comment: None of the officials mentioned Italy's earlier threats to raise the coral issue at a senior political level with the USG (para 7). End summary.

¶2. (U) Post delivered ref B, C, and E points to Counselor Laura Calligaro of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Office of Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development; to Antonio Maturani, head of Italy's CITES Management Authority; to Prof. Ezio Bussoletti, special advisor to the Italian Environment Ministry, and to Environment Ministry Diplomatic Advisor Antonio Bernardini, January 29 - February 1. SCICouns met with Calligaro on February 3 and SCI Specialist spoke with Maturani and Bussoletti on February 4 to discuss the points.

¶3. (SBU) Calligaro said that Italy is still fighting, although not with much success, for the EU to reconsider its decision to co-sponsor the U.S. proposal listing Corallium under CITES Appendix II, and to enter a reservation on it. She provided a copy of Italy's request to the EU (transmitted in ref A). The request repeats Italy's well-known arguments on the issue, including the need for more research and the need to take into account socio-economic implications. The request notes an 80 percent decline in 2009 Italian exports of the three Corallium species listed by China in CITES Appendix III, compared with 2008 exports. It also cites the December 2009 Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) ad hoc expert panel's decision not to support the Corallium

listing proposal.

¶4. (SBU) Maturani and Bussoletti requested the U.S.' help on the Corallium issue, and asked that the U.S. review its position in light of the FAO decision and recent findings by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), working with the TRAFFIC non-governmental organization (<http://www.traffic.org/cop15>). They held that the IUCN findings show that article 9.24 of the CITES criteria is not satisfied by current data, since they do not show a population decline in Corallium in the Pacific.

They asked the USG to wait for another year before (re-) submitting the Corallium proposal to CITES.

¶5. (SBU) On the other U.S. species proposals (sharks, polar bear, bobcat, snake trade and conservation management), Maturani said that the EU position is still "open." (He attended a technical-level EU Council meeting in Brussels on the subject on February 2, and said another such meeting will take place on February 26, but that that meeting is not likely to be definitive.) Stressing that his comments were very informal, and not an agreed Italian or EU position, he predicted that the EU would support all of the U.S. proposals except for bobcat (*Lynx rufus*). On bobcat, he said that the "look-alike" problem has not been completely solved and noted that the EU lynx is still endangered. (SCI Specialist urged him to review the U.S. draft on-line fur identification guide.)

¶6. (SBU) Calligaro said on February 3 that the Agriculture Ministry had recommended to the Environment Ministry, which has the lead on CITES, that Italy support a CITES Appendix I listing for bluefin tuna. (Per ref D, on January 27 Agriculture Under Secretary Buonfiglio confirmed Italy's plan to declare a 2010 moratorium on bluefin tuna purse-seining, and said that this decision makes Italy

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less afraid of a CITES Appendix I listing for it.) On February 4, as news of the French support for an Appendix I bluefin listing (with conditions) hit the press, Buonfiglio was quoted as saying, "We welcome with satisfaction the French position, which goes in the direction of the proposal already adopted by the Italian Central Consultative Committee." (On February 3 the Committee, which includes representatives of the regions and of the fishing industry, reportedly approved the moratorium proposal, which is described as covering roughly 1,500 tons of Italy's 1,900-ton bluefin quota.) An Italian fisheries official told SCI Specialist on February 4 that Italy was waiting for a decision of the European Parliament (presumably on EU subsidies for the idled purse-seiners) the week of February 8 before formalizing the GOI position. However, he added that Buonfiglio's statement to the press indicated Italy's support for the French proposal, including the conditions added by France.

¶7. (SBU) Comment: At the contentious September 23-26, 2009 workshop in Naples on "Red Coral Science, Management and Trade" co-sponsored by the U.S. and Italy, MFA representatives warned that the USG would be hearing about the coral issue at a senior political level. (MFA Under Secretary Vincenzo Scotti is the former mayor of Naples, where much of Italy's coral jewelry exports are made, and he had taken a personal interest in the issue.) None of Post's interlocutors mentioned high-level interventions in recent conversations, and they seemed subdued about Italy's chances of success on the issue. That said, the EU position on all of the CITES proposals clearly will not be set for some time, so opportunities for horse-trading remain. Post also will follow up on the request for points of contact on Italy's delegation, which have not yet been determined.

THORNE